



Arizona Builders' Alliance Southern Division

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thank you, Ruth.

It's a pleasure to be back with the Arizona Builders' Alliance.

You probably know, I have a long history with the ABA – including many of the people who've been in leadership positions with the association.

Many of you might remember I had the pleasure of swearing in ABA Chairman Bob Sisley during your Installation Dinner at La Mariposa back in 2006.

I remember from that evening that you host some of the nicest, friendliest events anywhere – and I'm happy to see that hasn't changed.

I'm also delighted to see that one of the programs you stress -- apprenticeship training -- has become a signature of the ABA.

It's important because apprenticeship training helps to ensure an outstanding construction workforce for the future.

At that 2006 Installation Dinner I mentioned, I was thrilled to assist in honoring the young craftsmen who graduated from your apprenticeship program that year.

And, since that time, you've taken pride in expanding the apprenticeship offerings to include training for plumbers and HVAC specialists, to go along with your already existing program for electricians.

And, your annual apprenticeship graduation ceremony sends many important messages – including the fact that ABA values leadership, teamwork and the delivery of a quality product.

Those are issues that should be stressed in all industries.

Another truly unique ABA effort is your annual Volunteer Day Program. There are few, if any, other trade associations that could do what ABA does: encouraging hundreds of companies and individuals to volunteer their personal time during the busy holiday season to provide tens of thousands of dollars in renovations free of charge to assist the most needy among us.

And while the ABA has now won 4 national awards from the Associated Builders and Contractors and the Associated General Contractors of America for its Volunteer Day efforts, I know the REAL reason you do it is because of your love for this community and the people who need a helping hand.

Some of you might not know this, but I think I received one of the first official letters of Ruth Brown's tenure as ABA chairman.

After years of neglect and indifference by our State Attorney General, the Legislature passed a bill sponsored by Tucson Senator Jonathan Paton revamping the Rio Nuevo Tax District -- so we could find out exactly what two hundred million dollars of your hard-earned tax dollars purchased in revitalizing downtown Tucson.

We all want a strong, vibrant downtown Tucson. We also want to be certain tax money is spent for the purposes it was intended.

Ruth's letter thanked me for my support of Jonathan's bill, and said that if I REALLY wanted to make sure the District was put on the right track, I should appoint former ABA Director Dan Cavanagh to the Rio Nuevo Board.

Dan, too, is an old friend, and, I'm glad to say, I took Ruth's advice.

One of the first things Dan helped achieve on the Board was to ensure an outside audit firm was retained to do a full performance audit on the Rio Nuevo Taxing District. That audit will praise the good and expose mistakes. The final report will be completed October 29th, and my administration will be reviewing the results carefully.

Another thing you may not know is that the first bill signing ceremony I ever did was with Dan and ABA State Executive Director Mark Minter — and it happened while I was Secretary of State.

The Alliance worked tirelessly to pass a bill that protected the construction industry from any mid-contract change in the sales tax rate, a change that could wipe out profit from construction projects.

The ABA asked for a bill-signing ceremony to commemorate the event, but the Governor at the time -- Janet Something-or-Other -- said she didn't have the time.

I'll let you in on a secret, as Secretary of State, I'm required to sign all bills into law.

I can't veto any of them, but I do have to sign every bill. So, I called Mark and Dan, complimented them on a great job of lobbying and said, "If you want a bill signing ceremony, come up to my office and I'll do it."

So, thanks to the ABA, I did my first "official" bill signing ceremony two years before I actually became Governor. As Paul Harvey used to say ... "now you know the rest of the story."

I want all of you to know that Mark Minter and ABA Director Dave Pittman – whom I have known since I was a state senator and Dave was writing for the Tucson Citizen – represent your interests with professionalism and integrity. They – AND you – understand that we must stop the budget spending spree, we must live within our means – and we must live with a balanced budget.

We ALL understand the federal government is not controlling illegal immigration and it is not securing our border, so Arizona must do what is necessary to do the job that the federal government refuses to do.

But Democrats have OPPOSED those efforts. In fact, Terry Goddard and the entire Democratic ticket have been endorsed and supported by the very same unions -- the Service Employees International Union and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union -- which are leading the boycott of Arizona. It is simply wrong for candidates to accept support from organizations that are funding and supporting the boycott of Arizona. They're job killers.

And Democratic plans to "make" work for people and spend taxpayer dollars to stimulate the economy is the wrong direction. We must REDUCE the burdens on business and allow them to create jobs, instead of the government creating jobs.

We must repeal and replace President Obama's health care plan to stop the billions of dollars that it will cost our country and our state. We must put consumers, not government officials in charge of our own health care.

Well, we've already changed the size of government.

We've changed the way government does business.

We've changed our policies and our priorities and the direction of our state.

We've permanently reduced state general fund spending by over two point two billion dollars and the state employee count by more than 10 percent.

My basic philosophy is that government just needs to get out of the way and let you -- our TRUE job creators -- grow your businesses the way YOU want to -- not the way the STATE wants you to.

My first official act as Governor was to issue a moratorium on rules, to reduce the regulatory burden on Arizona businesses.

And, I've been calling for tax reform since March 2009.

We must establish a more friendly tax code to retain existing employers, attract new investment capital and create high wage, sustainable jobs.

We're building a solid foundation, and, when it comes to encouraging job creation, I'm committed to preparing for the future with new ideas and innovation.

That's why I established the Arizona Commerce Authority and a private-sector leadership board focused on growing and diversifying Arizona's economy and creating quality jobs -- including jobs in rural Arizona.

This new Authority is coordinating and integrating the efforts of key partners like Science Foundation Arizona -- our universities -- regional economic development groups -- and local communities -- all working together to secure success for the State of Arizona.

I've committed ten million dollars to advance its mission through its approach to economic development.

Meanwhile, we've attracted over one billion dollars in new capital investment. AND, we've attracted NEW companies to Arizona -- creating 25-hundred new jobs for Arizonans.

Businesses across ALL sectors have added almost twenty thousand jobs since the job loss peak of Fall 2009.

"Business Facilities" a national publication and location advisor for site selection -- for both solar energy manufacturing and the alternative energy industry -- has now ranked Arizona as the "solar king," -- noting we offer "the highest solar power potential in the nation, and the state is by far the leading producer of equipment to capture these rays."

If we're going to build the economy for Arizona's second century, we must today begin preparing students and expect them to reach high academic standards. So, we've enacted some of the most sweeping reforms in education that the state has seen.

I believe we can move forward, creating more jobs and economic prosperity, or we can move backward toward socialism -- and more government, more spending, more regulation.

I want to create jobs; not kill them.

I'm working for jobs and the people of Arizona -- and the right for the truth to be heard, always.

So, to all of you job creators -- I say THANK YOU -- thank you -- for setting Arizona back on the road to prosperity.

We've come so far in the last 600 days. We've changed everything ... yet we have many more miles to go. And I am grateful you are with me on this journey.

God bless you and your families, and may God bless Arizona and the ABA -- and the United States of America.

Thank you.